

December 23, 1970

It was good of you to pass along your expression of continued confidence in the President's strong attachment to the principles of asylum and refuge. I shall be very happy to convey this to him. You may be assured that the President has instructed that all necessary measures must be taken to ensure that such a tragic event cannot happen again.

Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. John F. Thomas
Director, Intergovernmental
Committee for European
Migration
9, Rue du Valais
Geneva, Switzerland

No Objection to Declassification in Full 2013/03/26 : LOC-HAK-10-5-21-1

24400

~~SECRET/EXDIS~~ACTION

December 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Helmut Sonnenfeldt (S)

SUBJECT:

Lithuanian Defector Case: Hopefully the End

Mr. John Thomas, the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, has written (Tab B) to report that, though he was upset by the defector incident, he is confident that the President personally believes strongly in the right of asylum. (There is just a hint in the letter that Mr. Thomas hopes the US will continue its generous financial support for his Committee.) There is a brief reply letter at Tab A for your signature.

You may recall that a number of typed and hand-written materials from Kudirka (the Lithuanian defector) found their way into American hands. (Apparently, some of the fisheries experts and the interpreter on board obtained some originals and Xeroxed others.) The documents ultimately got to CIA (from State, the Coast Guard and the Marine Fisheries division of Commerce) for evaluation and translation. State has sent you a memo reporting that the Agency's preliminary analysis indicates that the documents are inconsequential (Tab C). We have subsequently received a copy of a memo from the CIA to the Coast Guard containing a full translation of Kudirka's personal notebook (Tab D). Tom Karamessines concludes that none of the information in the notebook is of intelligence value. This should conclude at least this aspect of the incident. It is possible, however, that State may decide to release the documents to the press at some point if there is any continuation of the previous press speculation that the documents contained important intelligence information. Such press speculation might have done a disservice to Kudirka, and the public release of the documents might be of some marginal help to him.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter to Mr. Thomas at Tab A.

ATD:mmm

~~SECRET/EXDIS~~

Dear John:

It was good of you to pass along your expression of continued confidence in the President's strong attachment to the principles of asylum and refuge. I shall be very happy to convey this to him. You may be assured that the President has instructed that all necessary measures must be taken to ensure that such a tragic event cannot happen again.

Warm regards,

Henry A. Kissinger

Mr. John F. Thomas
Director, Intergovernmental
Committee for European
Migration
9, Rue du Valais
Geneva, Switzerland

ATDowney:mm:12/17/70

THE DIRECTOR

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

7 December 1970

PERSONAL

Dear Henry:

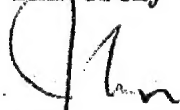
I deliberately refrained from sending a cable to the President on the unfortunate incident which occurred at Martha's Vineyard with regard to the Lithuanian sailor, Mr. Simas. You will recall that when I met with the President in February 1969 he emphasized his personal concern for refugees and he pledged his support to the efforts the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration was and is making to resettle from the European camps as quickly as possible those who "seek freedom with their feet". Although my twenty five years of service in the refugee field made me extremely upset about the incident, I did not feel that the President required a reminder from me to take whatever action he deemed necessary to see that such an incident will not reoccur.

The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration moved nearly 60,000 refugees to new homelands in 1969 and will move over 50,000 this year largely due to the generous contribution from the United States, fully supported by the President.

Please convey to the President that, while I do have a concern over what appears to be an administrative slip, I do have confidence in his personal belief in the right of asylum evidenced by his continued willingness to support the efforts being made by the 31 Member Governments of ICEM to alleviate the plight of those who have reached a safe haven.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,



John F. Thomas

Mr. Henry Kissinger
Special Division //
White House
Washington, D.C.
U. S. A.



S/S 16498

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET/EXDIS

December 8, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSESUBJECT: Documents Relating to Lithuanian Seaman
Simas I. Kudirka

In our memorandum to you of December 2, we noted that the Department of State had received from the Division of Foreign Fisheries of the National Marine Fisheries Service (U.S. Department of Commerce) a number of Xeroxed copies of typed and written materials belonging to Mr. Kudirka. We understand that these materials were photographed or copied while Mr. Kudirka was seeking asylum aboard the US Coast Guard Cutter VIGILANT. The copies of materials relating to Mr. Kudirka were included in a notebook belonging to our American delegation containing technical and background papers on the fisheries negotiations which took place between US and Soviet representatives on November 23 off Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The only original of a document relating to Kudirka in the notebook is the letter from the Soviet fishing-fleet commander, Popov, alleging that Mr. Kudirka had stolen 3,000 rubles from his safe and requesting his return to the Sovetskaya Litva. A copy of this communication is contained in the Department of Transportation's report to the President on the Kudirka case.

All of the material which was photographed of Mr. Kudirka's personal belongings was forwarded on December 3 to Mr. Karamessines of CIA for urgent analysis from an intelligence point of view. According to CIA, an initial reading of these particular documents indicates that they are "inconsequential." The Agency's analysis, however, will not be completed until it receives another group of documents relating to Mr. Kudirka which were in the hands of the US Coast Guard. We have no way of knowing whether the materials in the hands of the Coast Guard merely duplicate those we passed on to CIA or whether they constitute supplementary material and have some substantive importance. As of 11:00 a.m., December 7, CIA had not yet received the materials in the possession of the Coast Guard, but expected them shortly.

SECRET/EXDIS

GROUP 3

Downgraded at 12-year intervals,
not automatically declassified.

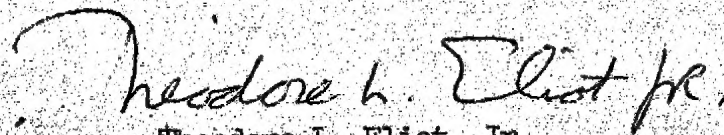
SECRET/EXDIS

- 2 -

We shall forward to you any analysis which CIA gives us of the Kudirka material.

In the meantime, you may be aware of news stories reporting allegations by Congressman Pucinski of Illinois that Mr. Kudirka had important documents with him and that he could possibly have been "one of the most important informers of our time." If it turns out that all the documents are innocuous, Congressman Pucinski may inadvertently have done an additional disservice to Mr. Kudirka, since it is highly likely that the Soviet authorities would use such statements to accuse Mr. Kudirka of crimes other than that of attempting to defect. This could result in an even stiffer punishment than he will undoubtedly receive.

If the CIA analysis shows the documents to be innocuous, we believe consideration should be given to releasing them to the press. We will make a recommendation on this score once we have received the CIA analysis. In the meanwhile, the National Marine Fisheries Service has agreed that we should retain the notebook on a temporary basis.



Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary

SECRET/EXDIS

SECRET

11 DEC 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Admiral Chester R. Bender, USCG
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

ATTENTION : Captain W.C. Dahlgren, USCG
Chief, Intelligence Staff

SUBJECT : Translation of Personal Notebook
Belonging to Lithuanian Seaman
Simas Ionovich Kudirka

1. Attached is a full translation of the personal notebook formerly in the possession of Simas Kudirka. As noted in our memorandum of 8 December 1970 on this subject, none of the information in this notebook is of intelligence value.

2. We are also returning herewith all of the materials transmitted from your office to the Central Intelligence Agency on 7 December 1970.

/s/ Thomas E. Karamezinas

Thomas E. Karamezinas
Deputy Director for Plans

- 2 Attachments:
1. Translation
 2. Books and papers

cc: Wymerley Coerr
Deputy Director for Coordination
Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Department of State